

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-8, 15-31, 34- 35, and 37-39 were pending.

Claims 1, 4, 6, 15, 16, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 31, 34, 35, 38 and 39 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hopkins U.S. Patent No. 5,999,624 (“Hopkins”). In addition, claims 5, 8, 20 and 30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious from Hopkins.

The Examiner finds patentable subject matter in claims 2, 3, 7, 17-19, 22, 25, 28, 29 and 37, and states these claims would be allowed if rewritten in suitable independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants Reply.

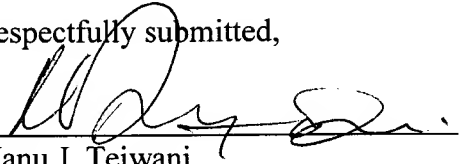
Applicants appreciate the Examiner’s finding of patentable subject patent matter in claims 2, 3, 7, 17-19, 22, 25, 28, 29 and 37.

Applicants respectfully traverse the prior art rejection of the remaining claims. However to expedite issuance of a patent in this case, applicants have cancelled intervening rejected claims 1, 6, 15, 16, 21, 24, 26, 27, 34, 35, 38 and 39 and incorporated their limitations in the allowable claims 2, 3, 7, 17, 22, 25, 28, 29 or 37. Applicants do so without prejudice to their rights to pursue the subject matter of the cancelled claims in related or other applications. Further, applicants have amended rejected claims 4-6, 8, 20, 23, 30 and 31 so that they now depend on one of the allowable claims.

Accordingly, amended claims 2-8, 17-19, 22, 23, 25, 28-31 and 37 are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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